PROJECT MUSE®

Corpse Hoarding: Control and the Female Body in "Bluebeard," "Schalken the Painter," and *Villette*

Katherine J. Kim

Studies in the Novel, Volume 43, Numbers 4, Winter 2011, pp. 406-427 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/sdn.2011.0051*

For additional information about this article
https://muse.jhu.edu/article/464497

Access provided at 6 Jan 2020 06:21 GMT from University of Toledo

CORPSE HOARDING: CONTROL AND THE FEMALE BODY IN "BLUEBEARD," "SCHALKEN THE PAINTER," AND *VILLETTE*

KATHERINE J. KIM

> M. Paul superintended my repast, and almost forced upon me more than I could swallow.
>
> "A la bonne heure," he cried, when I signified that I really could take no more, and, with uplifted hands, implored to be spared the additional roll on which his hand just spread butter. "You will set me down as a species of tyrant and Bluebeard, starving women in a garret; whereas, after all, I am no such thing."[1]
>
> —Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*[1]

In the above quotation from Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853), pensionnat instructor Paul Emanuel resists association with the fairy tale wife-murderer Bluebeard, but his allusion compels attention. Ordering fellow-teacher and *Villette* narrator Lucy Snowe to memorize lines for a school play that evening, Paul drags Lucy to the pensionnat's attic and locks her in alone, secretly listening to her rehearse. When he finally unlocks the door and Lucy explains she is hungry, Paul pulls her "down-down-down to the very kitchen. I thought I should have gone to the cellar," where he overcompensates for starving Lucy by force-feeding her (1:190). However, Bluebeard's wife is never physically starved in Charles Perrault's 1697 fairy tale "Bluebeard," the earliest known text to specifically use the name "Bluebeard."[2] Instead, she lives decadently in a luxurious castle, and it is her curiosity that requires satiation rather than her body. Though Bluebeard warns his wife against opening a locked chamber door, she does so once Bluebeard leaves home (145). This forbidden chamber harbors Bluebeard's previous overly-curious wives' corpses arranged like a

Studies in the Novel, volume 43, number 4 (Winter 2011). Copyright © 2011 by the University of North Texas. All rights to reproduction in any form reserved.

gruesome tableau symbolizing Bluebeard's past secrets (murders and corpse hoarding) and present ones (desire for repetitive discovery of the corpses, his current wife's horror, and his uxoricide) (146-47).

Lucy does not seek entrance either to the play or into the attic, but the treatment she receives from Paul in the above passage presents her as more like Bluebeard's wives than she may acknowledge. Additionally, while Bluebeard prevents future defiance from his wives through murder and control of their corpses, Paul is neither husband nor killer. Still, he does possess a dead fiancée that Lucy is not aware of for much of the novel, and he attempts to control Lucy's body, locking her away and personally regulating what she takes into herself figuratively and literally—the play's words, limited sights and sounds in the dark attic, and food.

Paul exposes himself to comparisons with Bluebeard through the mere contention that he is *not* like the fairy tale character. However, *Villette*'s more fascinating and less apparent link to "Bluebeard" is the manner in which Lucy inverts circumstances with those who would control, observe, and confine her in some key scenes, making her not just like Bluebeard's wives but like Bluebeard himself. To explore this concept, I first relate a brief history of Perrault's "Bluebeard" and then interpret Brontë-admired Irish author Joseph Sheridan LeFanu's short story "Strange Event in the Life of Schalken the Painter" (1839) as a literary descendant of "Bluebeard" that further develops the figurative demonstrations of control and corpse hoarding seen in the fairy tale. I then contend that *Villette* can be viewed as influenced by both tales, asserting that Brontë's novel appropriates tropes of control, observation, and confinement of the female body as they appear in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken." By examining *Villette* through the contexts of these two tales, we can gain insight into the physically and mentally violent history of patriarchal control Brontë's text manipulates to explore female reactive resistance against domination and regulation by patriarchy and the male gaze. Lucy's anxieties over personal freedom and her partial control over how others observe her—along with how she in a sense hoards mental versions of her two loves Dr. John Graham Bretton and Paul—flout the gender dynamics that appear in Perrault's and LeFanu's tales; her story depicts a woman symbolically hoarding and suspending men in an existence between life and death.[3] Lucy's attempts to control how we and male characters view her (physically and figuratively) are symptomatic of emotional and psychological barricades she constructs to protect her sense of self from both the male gaze and the pain of lost love she experiences before recording her narrative. Consequently, Lucy's desires for personal freedom and control, along with her figurative suspension of men, reveal complex control and power dynamics between the observer and the observed female body.

Previous literary criticism linking "Bluebeard" to nineteenth-century English literature has focused primarily on Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). For

instance, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note that Jane compares Thornfield Hall's third floor corridor to one in Bluebeard's castle, presaging a locked-away secret that not only eventually involves her but also reflects potential psychological consequences of patriarchal control (see chapter 10). More recently, Heta Pyrhönen examines reciprocal relations between *Jane Eyre* and "Bluebeard," providing insight into how a fairy tale can influence a work of literary fiction that then propagates a subsequent reciprocal relationship of influence with its ancestral tale (see chapter 1). Studies of *Jane Eyre* along with "Bluebeard" have indeed led to a rich and varied array of literary criticism (see Hermansson; and see Tatar). Yet in this paper, I examine not *Jane Eyre* in relation to the fairy tale but instead *Villette*, a later Brontë novel that has received much less attention for its "Bluebeard" reference.

The serial-killer husband named Bluebeard first appeared in Perrault's fairy tale collection *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (*Classic* 138). In 1729, Robert Samber published a very successful first English translation of Perrault's tales that was owned by the Brontës (Pyrhönen 9). "Bluebeard" later further acquired fame in England through the popular George Colman the Younger and Michael Kelly opera *Blue Beard, or Female Curiosity!* (1798), which was influenced by André Modeste Grétry's opera *Raoul Barbe Bleue* (1789) (Hermansson 51). This tale of marriage gone horribly wrong permeated English culture to the extent that numerous Victorian-era literary works specifically mention Bluebeard. For instance, Bluebeard (as character; opera; or simply the owner of a suspect past, a castle, and a gruesome secret) appears momentarily, but explicitly by name, in writings by authors such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, H. G. Wells, and Brontë's friend William Makepeace Thackeray, who penned multiple works alluding to, naming, or reformulating "Bluebeard."[4]

The fact that Bluebeard appears, sometimes only briefly, in so many nineteenth-century literary texts implies that authors counted on reader recognition of the name and the story from which it came. But why did these authors use this particular fairy tale so frequently in their writings? Pyrhönen claims that the "perverted workings of power" in "Bluebeard" never outgrow historical relevance or cultural import (241). Consequently, one possible explanation is the variety of interpretations pertinent to numerous cultures and times to which "Bluebeard" lends itself; readers are left with many choices as to what they deem is the central focus of the story, whether it be marrying for money rather than love, the culturally relevant dangers associated with wedding virtual strangers potentially with dark secrets, or destructive Pandora or Psyche-like curiosity. Because of the seemingly inexhaustible unfinished cultural work that can be done using the "Bluebeard" tale, successive generations remain interested in the story. Therefore, variants of the tale continue to appear. But regardless of specific reasons, it is undeniable that Bluebeard repeatedly appeared in nineteenth-century English literary culture.

LeFanu knew "Bluebeard" at the very latest prior to the October 1839 publication of his "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family," in which he directly mentions Bluebeard. In this story, Fanny Richardson relates how her new husband Lord Glenfallen hides his blind first wife in a portion of their "enchanted castle" (LeFanu 3:62). After Lord Glenfallen claims women cannot keep secrets, he decides to "test" Fanny:

> "I shall be your *Bluebeard*….What I desire is intimately, inseparably, connected with your happiness and honour as well as my own….You must promise me…you will visit *only* that part of the castle which can be reached from the front entrance, leaving the back entrance and the part of the building commanded immediately by it…; and never at any time seek to pry or peek into them….I do not urge this in jest or in caprice, but from a solemn conviction that danger and misery will be the certain consequences of your not observing what I prescribe….Promise me, then, these things, as you hope for peace here, and for mercy hereafter." (3:75-77)

Here, the vital issue to Lord Glenfallen is not Fanny's secret-keeping ability but her ability to heed a physical mandate prohibiting knowledge and curiosity satiation. Thus, Fanny's situation becomes more like that of Bluebeard's wife than Lord Glenfallen's comment regarding women's secret-keeping initially implies. Through this "Bluebeard" reference and prohibition, then, LeFanu makes obvious his familiarity with the fairy tale; beyond referencing Bluebeard by name, LeFanu incorporates the concepts of a prohibited area of a house containing a previous wife, the current wife's discovery of the previous wife/wives approximately a month after marriage, and the husband's gory death.[5]

Though "Schalken" was first published in May 1839, five months before "A Chapter," LeFanu was most likely familiar with "Bluebeard" long before he composed either work; the fact that both of these stories appear too greatly influenced by "Bluebeard" to discount similarities suggests that LeFanu utilized inspiration from the well-known fairy tale for these works. Indeed, "Schalken" presents multiple similarities and possible allusions to "Bluebeard," one of the most direct being that the villainous husband who purchases Rose Velderkaust, Wilken Vanderhausen, is literally blue.[6]

In "Schalken," the titular artist loses his love Rose to the mysterious stranger Vanderhausen. As in "Bluebeard" and "A Chapter," a display of wealth entices the prospective bride's guardian into essentially selling the young woman (2:209-14). Though Rose abides by her uncle Gerard Douw's decision and weds Vanderhausen, she does so unwillingly because she reciprocates Schalken's love and fears the blue stranger. Months after her forced marriage, Rose suddenly appears at Douw's home famished, frightened, and draped in white cloth. Though she warns Douw and Schalken that she will be lost forever if left alone in the bedroom where she is put to rest, the mandate slips their minds; as soon as they cross the room's threshold, the door slams shut by

invisible means. Once it reopens, Rose is nowhere to be seen (2:244-46). It is only many years later that Schalken, while in Rotterdam Church for his father's funeral, claims he sees the young Rose dressed in white, holding a lamp, and beckoning him down into the church vaults. She leads him into what looks like an antique-filled, "old-fashioned Dutch apartment" with a bed that contains "sitting bolt upright…the livid and demoniac form of Vanderhausen" (2:251-52). Schalken is later found unconscious in the vaults near a large coffin, but there is no trace of Rose, Vanderhausen, or the Dutch furnishings (2:252). Even such a brief synopsis of "Schalken" as given above reveals multiple similarities with "Bluebeard," including a scared bride unwillingly locked in a room by a threatening, physically frightful husband.

In a suggestive coincidence, Brontë was a known admirer of LeFanu's works, possibly even writing him in the 1830s to praise his *Dublin University Magazine* publications such as "A Chapter" and "Schalken" (Byrne 87). Additionally, multiple scholars note strikingly similar, "almost identical" plot characteristics in "A Chapter" and *Jane Eyre* (Byrne 87; see also McCormack 160-61). Through Brontë's familiarity with "Bluebeard" (via Samber's Perrault translation, acquaintances like Thackeray, popular theatre productions, literary references, or other sources), her awareness of LeFanu's appropriation of the tale, and her use of "Bluebeard" and some of LeFanu's already reworked concepts from "Bluebeard," *Villette* can be seen as extending a line of "Bluebeard" literary variations or appropriations, whether the works in this line were consciously formulated to do so or not. Bluebeard found many certain or very plausible doorways into Brontë's mind, and so it is not surprising that we discover him lurking in the conceptual shadows and peeking through narrative apertures of not only *Jane Eyre* but also *Villette*.

Yet unlike "Bluebeard" and "Schalken," *Villette* presents a woman as narrator and controller of the text. "Bluebeard" and "Schalken" immediately begin shifting focus from their suffering female characters through titles naming male characters (murderer and failed hero, respectively). In contrast, *Villette* names not a male character but a place that indirectly hints at both human society (a city name representing a societal establishment location) and the feminine through the feminine ending "-ette." This lack of direct reference to Lucy Snowe (compared to "Bluebeard," "Schalken," and even Brontë's other "Bluebeard"-referencing work *Jane Eyre*) is representative of Lucy's narrative tactic of simultaneously presenting her life story while deflecting reader focus away from herself onto other characters, situations, objects, and locations. Multiple literary critics have discussed how Lucy frequently evades lucid self-disclosure even though she writes an autobiographical text; Hsiao-Hung Lee claims, "[by] merging into somebody else's stories, Lucy disowns her personal history but remains a role-player on the stage" (78). For instance, Lee insightfully observes that Lucy avoids disclosing information about her

childhood by instead depicting the young Paulina Home (78). She even avoids revealing her own name until well after naming a number of other characters, such as Paulina, Mrs. Bretton, and the nurse-maid Harriet (1:15). Lucy resists much direct self-disclosure by providing oblique glances of herself through descriptions of others, just as the title *Villette* indirectly hints at its female narrator without naming her. We therefore witness Lucy attempting to regulate what we know of her, and thus how we comprehend her, from the commencement of her story.

Villette plays with themes of patriarchal control via an occasionally reticent female narrator that resists the paternalistic social forces signaled in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken" as well as the female roles into which women in the two tales are raised and forced. Instead of utterly and passively submitting to gender-specific rules and roles, Lucy desires control over herself and the manner in which others view her. She asserts control over the display of her body beyond that of the women in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken"; Bluebeard's dead wives and Rose become displayed objects controlled by men while Lucy resists such a situation. In "Bluebeard," the titular murderer not only kills his wives, but he also arranges and displays their corpses like artwork in the forbidden chamber: "At first [Bluebeard's wife] saw nothing, for the windows were closed. After a few moments, she began to realize that the floor was covered with clotted blood and that the blood reflected the bodies of several dead women hung up on the walls…" (*Classic* 145). The hanging corpses are not described as decomposing; they seem frozen in time like pictures mounted on walls.[7] Bluebeard further controls this corpse display as well as its viewers (the women he marries, then murders) through the room's darkness. Since Bluebeard seals the chamber's windows, the only light in the room emanates from the doorway the wife opens. This light allows the wife and the reader only a gruesome reflection of Bluebeard's dead wives through the blood on the floor rather than a direct view. The wife at first appears to control light and revelation, as it is her transgression that allows Bluebeard's deeds to be "illuminated." However, Bluebeard in fact controls the visual situation through the darkness and corpse arrangement he concocts. Even after his wives' abilities to disobey him are eliminated, Bluebeard constructs his horrifying tableau of corpses to repetitively relive punishing and dominating women through the living wife's revelation of the corpses and eventual sharing of their fate. He consequently reveals himself as not only sadistically homicidal but furthermore perverted in his corpse hoarding, the display he arranges, and his desire to repetitively relive his physical dominance over his victims.

Similarly, Schalken controls a depiction of Rose since another man (Vanderhausen) already possesses her physical body. After his vision of Rose in Rotterdam Church, Schalken paints a version of Rose with a coquettish expression on her face:

> [The picture] represented the interior of what might be a chamber in some antique religious building—the foreground was occupied by a female figure, arrayed in a species of white robe, part of which is arranged so as to form a veil. The dress, however, is not strictly that of any religious order….[The] figure bears a lamp, by whose light alone the form and face are illuminated; the features are marked by an arch smile, such as pretty women wear when engaged in successfully practising [sic] some roguish trick…. (2:186)

Schalken paints Rose as tempting viewer curiosity regarding what her lamplight discloses, but also teasingly denying sufficient illumination to reveal what occurs behind her and why she smiles archly. Rose's lamp appears to indicate Rose as knower and controller of the depicted visual situation. Her light reveals her white outfit somewhat like (but not affirmed as) bridal or funereal garb, and her smile exhibits knowledge of roguery to which we are not privy (2:186-87). While Bluebeard feigns giving his wife the power of illuminating both the secret chamber and her and our knowledge of the room's contents, Schalken paints Rose as controller of (in)sight in the painting though it is actually Schalken who, as the painting's creator, possesses ultimate dominance over this Rose. Rose's arch smile thus does not necessarily reflect a mischievous trick she concocts or some secret knowledge but instead exhibits Schalken's projection of those attributes onto her.

Schalken depicts Rose as if she were alive (holding a lamp and smiling) rather than as a corpse, essentially situating his version of Rose in a state between life and death. As Elisabeth Bronfen explains regarding artistic representations of dead or dying female bodies, female corpse preservation reflects a desire for possession and control over that body, where there exists an "eternally controlled deferral of desire through death and preservation" (96). Bronfen claims that like the body of the fairy tale princess Snow White, which remains eternally frozen until rescued by the Prince, female corpses in static depictions arrest time before the ravages of decay can be fulfilled (95-99). In "Schalken," Rose (whether corpse, spectre, or living being) appears to not physically age from the time she disappears to when Schalken encounters her years later (2:250). In both Schalken's final vision of her and his painting, she remains preserved like the bodies Bronfen examines and the corpses of Bluebeard's wives. However, Rose is not merely suspended immediately post-mortem; she is entrapped between life and death as a fetishized object by both her husband and her past lover. Rose's state of being thus becomes potentially even more horrifying than that of Bluebeard's wives—instead of only her lifeless corpse being hoarded and displayed, Rose's image, the means through which she is viewed by others, is perpetually controlled by Schalken while her body and possibly her eternal spirit are kept animated and bound with the dead (or, perhaps more accurately, the undead) by Vanderhausen. Though Rose declares that "the dead and the living can never be one," she in fact becomes a link between life and death that theorists such as Bronfen and Eve Kosofsky

Sedgwick assert the female body provides patriarchy.[8] Vanderhausen quickly asserts this point when Douw claims that Rose possesses some choice in her own marriage: "She is mine if *you* like to make her so" (2:211). Not only does Rose connect Schalken and Vanderhausen by bringing Schalken down into Rotterdam Church's vaults to view Vanderhausen's "bold upright" body, which is stiff like a corpse in rigor mortis, but she is forced into a marriage of "traffic and calculation" between Douw and Vanderhausen (2:251-52 and 2:218). "Schalken" thus moves beyond the control over female bodies that occurs in "Bluebeard": the male gains control over the female body he previously attained through killing and then possessing that body even *before* the body becomes a corpse. Consequently, Rose becomes the controlled victim of not one but two Bluebeard-like men: Schalken and Vanderhausen.

In contrast to the passiveness or feigned self-induced activeness of Bluebeard's wives and Rose, Lucy Snowe complicates and combats displays of female bodies contained or controlled by men—especially by the man that challenges her personal control the most, Paul Emanuel. Two such instances in *Villette* concern a painting of Cleopatra Lucy views in an art gallery and her employer Madame Beck's pensionnat's vaudeville performance. Both the art gallery scene and Lucy's role in the vaudeville exhibit how Lucy complicates concepts of male-controlled vision, display, and observance of female bodies as portrayed in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken."

While left alone by Graham Bretton in an art gallery, Lucy sits on a bench before "the queen of the collection," a painting titled "Cleopatra":

> It represented a woman, considerably larger, I thought, than the life.… [She was] extremely well fed: very much butcher's meat…must she have consumed to attain that breadth and height, that wealth of muscle, that affluence of flesh. She lay half-reclined on a couch:…she appeared in hearty health, strong enough to do the work of two plain cooks;…she ought to have been standing, or at least sitting bolt upright. She had no business to lounge away the noon on a sofa. She ought likewise to have worn decent garments…: out of abundance of material…she managed to make inefficient raiment. Then, for the wretched untidiness surrounding her, there could be no excuse. Pots and pans—perhaps I ought to say vases and goblets—were rolled here and there on the foreground; a perfect rubbish of flowers was mixed amongst them, and an absurd and disorderly mass of curtain upholstery smothered the couch and cumbered the floor. (2:284-85)

Lucy's depiction of this Cleopatra as possibly gluttonous, lazy, lax, immodest, and living in a slovenly manner contrasts the mythos of the ideal Victorian woman; this display of voluptuousness and excess opposes idealized images of the selfless, demure, and economical housewife and caregiver depicted in mid-Victorian domestic tracts, conduct guides, and household manuals that attempted to describe and define the woman's role in the family and larger social contexts. Elizabeth Langland explains, "Victorian myth suggested that

a woman by nature diffuses a charm and order that turn the home into a refuge from the capitalist competition of the marketplace" (298). In addition, Drew Lamonica notes that the Victorian mother "[ideally] provided an example of selfless devotion and service to her family, which helped to condition social identity for her children, especially her daughters, advancing a valuation of communal welfare over self-interest and displaying a cheerful acceptance of gender-determined limits" (17). This ideal woman, then, provided a nurturing retreat from the world beyond the home's walls while serving as a sustaining cord to the outside world that allowed family members opportunities of departure, but not complete disassociation, from society. She sustained and strengthened family social connections through house calls, charitable visits, and other social responsibilities while keeping an orderly, regulated home (Langland 298). Similar to how Rose becomes an exchange object linking Vanderhausen and Douw, the ideal Victorian woman essentially existed in relation to others as wife, mother, and/or daughter who maintained social links and passed Victorian patriarchal ideals to future generations through example. This woman was the "angel of the hearth" as discussed by theorists such as Gilbert and Gubar (see chapter 1). In contrast, the overfed, reclining Cleopatra is the sole being in a decadent portrait, surrounded by what Lucy reduces descriptively to a disorderly array of clutter (2:285). This Cleopatra serves no one and appears to not care about modesty or orderliness in either dress or housekeeping.

Though Lucy prefers viewing the "exquisite little pictures of still life…hung modestly beneath that coarse and preposterous canvas," Paul unsuccessfully attempts to control Lucy's gaze by sitting her "in a particularly dull corner" and ordering her to "turn to the wall and study your four pictures of a woman's life," "La vie d'une femme," rather than what he deems inappropriate for an unmarried woman to view (2:286-87). Instead of the immodest "Cleopatra" or the still life nature pictures devoid of human bodies, Paul attempts to force-feed this third visual option for Lucy to not simply observe, but to study. However, Lucy describes the women in these paintings as a "she-hypocrite" exiting a church, a woman in white praying in an "exasperated manner," a disconsolate woman over a puffy baby, and a black woman surveying a monument with a little black girl (2:287-88). Lucy further describes them as "insincere, ill-humoured, bloodless, brainless nonentities! As bad in their way as the indolent gipsy-giantess, the Cleopatra, in hers" (2:288). Paul desires that Lucy view only representations of the pious, caretaking "angel of the hearth" and nothing contradictory to the mythos they embody. Like Bluebeard's non-decomposing wives hanging from the walls of his bloody chamber, the women in "La vie d'une femme" are frozen in time and mounted on walls for display in a representation of patriarchal control over the female body. Paul's mandate that Lucy study these women creates yet another layer of attempted patriarchal control in which Lucy is instructed to essentially learn how to be a

proper woman from premeditated, stylized depictions of women accepted by Paul and forced onto Lucy ("*your* four pictures," emphasis added). However, Lucy appreciates the still life pictures for their aesthetic beauty rather than for possible lessons on female propriety (2:286). As Jane Kromm states, "What is of paramount importance for Lucy's critical position is that the effects of naturalism, honestly observed and skillfully rendered, offer the viewer a glimpse of higher moral values, while the traditional modes of transcendent art, especially allegory, are less capable of providing similarly honest, elevating, experiences" (385). In fact, through her cutting commentaries on "Cleopatra" and "La vie d'une femme," Lucy exposes how enforcing patriarchal ideals of women through such visual representation can falter; the women in the paintings Paul recommends are frozen in displays of supposed piousness for exhibition, yet Lucy claims they merely act out stylized patriarchal depictions of piousness rather than true sincerity. Lucy thus implies that the pictorial lessons of female propriety Paul endeavors to force upon her are mere farces lacking true moral significance.

Paul continues to express outrage at Lucy's visual liberty, exclaiming, "How dare you, a young person, sit coolly down, with the self-possession of a garçon, and look at *that* picture [the 'Cleopatra']?" (2:291). Lucy does not directly refute and defy Paul but instead mocks his amazement and contempt by feigning ignorance of his shock, admitting, "I had a certain pleasure in keeping cool, and working him up" (2:287). Lucy further enrages him by asking, "What is the matter, monsieur?" and stating, "It is a very ugly picture, but I cannot at all see why I should not look at it" (2:287). By toying with Paul, Lucy asserts her right as an observer with visual freedom despite her status as a single young woman (even if it is as an observer of a female body). Moreover, she mocks both Paul's conservatism and the extravagant image that attracts onlookers while (or perhaps because?) it contrasts the Victorian womanly ideal. Lucy and Paul's exchange exhibits how Lucy agrees with some aspects of Victorian female propriety such as modesty and orderliness but asserts her power to make personal judgments and not be told what she should consider proper or upon what she can or cannot make judgments in the first place.

Lucy extends her authoritative claims over what she observes in the gallery by making Paul the periphery and Colonel de Hamal (Graham's rival for Ginevra Fanshawe's affections) the focus of her observations. Instead of studying the paintings Paul recommends, Lucy requests Paul move aside so she can better examine de Hamal:

> What a figure, so trim and natty! What womanish feet and hands! How daintily he held a glass to one of his optics! With what admiration he gazed upon the Cleopatra! And then, how engagingly he tittered and whispered a friend at his elbow! Oh, the man of sense! Oh, the refined gentleman of superior taste and tact! I observed him for about ten minutes, and perceived that he was exceedingly taken with [the "Cleopatra"]. So much was I interested in his

> bearing, so absorbed in divining his character by his looks and movements, I temporarily forgot M. Paul…. (2:292)

Lucy's curiosity and eagerness to study de Hamal contrast her harsh depiction of the "Cleopatra" by portraying him as more like an ideal Victorian woman than the fictional Cleopatra; while Lucy describes Cleopatra as large, immodest, and messy, she claims that de Hamal is trim, refined, and dainty (see also Voskuil 433). Through such descriptions, Lucy situates de Hamal in the position of observed feminine figure as seen in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken"; while de Hamal looks freely at Cleopatra, thus following the "Bluebeard" and "Schalken" pattern of man observing woman and/or controlling woman's observations, Lucy pushes interpretations of observations in this scene by citing herself as observer of the observer of the female body. Furthermore, Lucy again asserts control over what she sees by requesting Paul move, thus subtracting him from her line of sight. Paul perceives her casting him aside to the extent that he does not even say goodbye when he departs; his body vanishes from view like those of Bluebeard's wives and Rose. Though she does not assert control over the male gaze, in this scene Lucy maintains control over her own visual observations in such a way that positions her as authoritative gazer and Paul as disappearing body. Paul may have put Lucy in a corner, but Lucy agrees to her transfer because she already completed her viewing of the "Cleopatra" and still maintains authority over what she observes from that corner, interestingly by still retaining the aspect of curiosity that is so dangerous to Bluebeard's wife. Lucy refuses to continue studying the female body (as symbolized by the "Cleopatra" and "La vie d'une femme"), and as a result makes both presence and absence concern the male body (de Hamal and Paul).

Of course, the concept of man as observer of woman and controller of woman's sight as in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken" is neither merely reversed nor maintained here; Lucy does not become a man physically or in others' minds, and Paul and de Hamal are not women. However, Lucy's observations, actions, and reactions regarding sight and body viewing complicate the controlling, displaying, and moving of female bodies in this scene. By requesting Paul move, disregarding him, and describing de Hamal as womanly, Lucy simultaneously maintains *and* violates the concepts of masculine control of woman's sight and the female body as viewed object. She appears to flip the gender roles of observer and observed by surveying de Hamal, but then further complicates matters by describing him as womanly; Lucy makes the *feminized* man her chosen visual object of study, thus further reworking the concept of the masculine gaze that she at first seems to combat. Lucy consequently relocates authority to the woman by complicating and destabilizing the position of man as controller and observer of the female body and woman's sight.

Lucy also complicates man's control over woman's vision and female body display during *Villette*'s "The Fête" chapter. At first, Lucy appears to follow the

standard role of female bodies controlled and displayed for observation by men that occur in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken." Indeed, her account of Paul pulling her up to the attic to memorize lines resembles movements of Bluebeard's final wife and Rose when influenced or physically controlled by their husbands: "I found myself…convoyed along as in a species of whirlwind, up stairs, up two pair of stairs, nay, actually up three…to the solitary and lofty attic was I borne, put in and locked in, the key being on the door, and that key he took with him, and vanished" (1:187). Paul's pulling Lucy up to the attic and down to the kitchen resembles multiple explicit and implicit physical upward and downward movements in "Bluebeard" and "Schalken." For instance, the forbidden chamber to which Bluebeard tempts his wives is reached by going downstairs, and his last wife runs "down a back staircase in such haste that she nearly broke her neck two or three times" (*Classic* 733). Additionally, Bluebeard repeatedly commands his wife to descend the stairs from her room and accept her death (734). Rose appears to make two physical descents impelled by Vanderhausen: one from Douw's bedroom window down into the water below, and one in Rotterdam Church when she leads Schalken down into the church vaults to Vanderhausen (2:246 and 2:250-51).

Paul does not kill Lucy when he locks her in the attic with remnants of other women (old dresses, coats, and possibly the Nun supposedly haunting the pensionnat) (1:188). Still, he confines her body behind a closed door similar to how Bluebeard locks his wives' corpses in his bloody chamber and Vanderhausen supernaturally shuts and seals a door to isolate Rose (2:245). Paul subsequently puts Lucy on private display for his own scrutiny, listening behind the door while Lucy rehearses, and then eventually opening the door and exclaiming, "Encore!...Et pint de grimaces! A bas la timidité!" (1:190). He then drags Lucy down to the kitchen to force-feed her in the scene that opens this essay. Lucy implicates Paul as forceful and controlling immediately before his reference to Bluebeard in which he attempts to preempt Lucy's claiming she was starved (1:191). Her pleading with Paul to be spared further feeding mimics Bluebeard's wife's imploring to be spared the deadly consequences of satiating her curiosity. As Bluebeard tests his wife and then forces upon her an exaggeration of what she desires (becoming the chamber's contents rather than merely knowing what is inside the room), so also does Paul test Lucy and then force her beyond satiety. Lucy's word choices here depict Paul as the domineering Bluebeard he cites, as do numerous other instances throughout the text, such as when Lucy recounts, "my heart got up into my throat. M. Paul discovered this, and gave me a side-scowl and a little shake for my pains" (1:191). In another instance, Paul drives Lucy and her pupils to tears, and even violently attacks the stove near Lucy's desk: "the little iron door was nearly dashed from its hinges, the fuel was made to fly" (2:345). Many of Lucy's descriptions of Paul throughout *Villette* clearly portray a similarity to Bluebeard that is both mentally and physically threatening.

Despite Paul's imprisoning, starving, and force-feeding Lucy before the performance, Lucy later asserts ultimate control over what the play's audience sees when observing her because she refuses to trade her own clothes for her fop character's costume. She adamantly explains, "To be dressed like a man did not please, and would not suit me. I had consented to take a man's name and part; as to his dress—*halte lá!* No. I would keep my own dress; come what might. M. Paul might storm, might rage: I would keep my own dress. I said so, with a voice as resolute in intent, as it was low, and perhaps unsteady, in utterance" (1:193). Her refusal to relinquish her clothes for her male character's costume denies an outward loss of femaleness in favor of full vestment and masking as "of the nobler sex" in front of the play's audience (1:194). Instead, "[retaining] my woman's garb without the slightest retrenchment, I merely assumed in addition, a little vest, a collar, and cravat, and a paletot of small dimensions.... Having loosened my hair out of its braids, made up the long back hair close, and brushed the front hair to one side, I took my hat and gloves in my hand and came out" (1:194). Lucy contests the necessity for complete division between her female self and the male character the audience is supposed to see by refusing to strip herself of her personal clothing. Adding men's garb without relinquishing any of hers allows Lucy to incorporate a display of masculinity without the sacrifice desired by Paul and the other instructor involved with the play, Zélie St. Pierre. Lucy further assumes control over her exterior by not allowing anyone to help her dress: "it must be arranged in my own way: nobody must meddle; the things must not be forced upon me" (1:194). Lucy attempts to control her body's appearance and denies full concealment of her womanhood; she rejects complete suppression of her femaleness, and consequently Lucy is viewed onstage as simultaneously male and female. As in the art gallery, Lucy here complies with aspects of propriety connected to gendered displays of the body by donning garb socially recognized as for men in order to portray the fop. However, she demands at least partial control over her observed body by wearing all of her own clothes. Additionally, similar to how she examines de Hamal while he observes the "Cleopatra," Lucy here studies the audience while acting onstage. More specifically, she discerns to whom Ginevra acts: to Graham. Again, Lucy observes men observing women by watching Graham as Ginevra displays herself to him. By doing so while in the combined garb of male and female genders, she combats full complicity with masculine control over the sight and bodies of women that is vital to "Bluebeard" and "Schalken." Lucy complicates observer, observed, and controller of observation divisions determined by gender in these previous "Bluebeard" texts by combating such distinctions and conflating visual perceptions of gender divisions.

Lucy's evolving relationship with Paul challenges Lucy because of Paul's attempts to police and confine her within a patriarchal female ideal. Beyond his aggressiveness before the vaudeville and his moving Lucy away from

the "Cleopatra," Paul challenges Lucy's perspectives on female propriety throughout *Villette*, such as when he tutors her. The fact that Paul devotes his spare time to teaching her, but then berates her when she rapidly progresses, puzzles Lucy:

> the light changed in his eyes from a beam to a spark; he fretted, he opposed, he curbed me imperiously; the more I did, the harder I worked, the less he seemed content. Sarcasms of which the severity amazed and puzzled me, harassed my ears; there flowed out the bitterest innuendoes against the "pride of intellect." I was vaguely threatened with, I know not what doom, if I ever trespassed the limits proper to my sex, and conceived a contraband appetite for unfeminine knowledge. (3:508)

Paul's reaction to Lucy's eagerness reflects a belief long-held before and during the Victorian period that women's learning should be monitored. Multiple influential nineteenth-century theorists, scientists, and doctors such as Dr. Edward H. Clarke, G. Stanley Hall, and Sir James Crichton-Browne warned of the negative effects of straining a woman's brain. For instance, one theory against women learning rapidly purported that menstruation taxes women to such an extent that any overworking of the brain may compromise the entire body: "Damage could follow directly from the brain's drawing too much blood from the reproductive organs, or indirectly through the evil effects of tension brought on by overly rigorous work. It could occur during a girl's school days, or after she finished school and was ready to begin her home and family" (Trecker 356-57). Interpreted through this context, Paul's anger at Lucy's rapid adeptness points to how it is not necessarily only knowledge that is threatening, but instead it is also the curiosity Lucy exhibits through the speed with which she learns.

Paul's attempts to check Lucy's academic progress somewhat resemble Bluebeard's strategic decision to tell his wife about the bloody chamber just before he travels abroad (*Classic* 144-45). Like Bluebeard, Paul attempts to withhold knowledge from a woman until he deems it the proper time for her illumination. Paul's desire to control Lucy's knowledge also resembles how this concept appears in "Schalken." Douw and Vanderhausen are presented in the text as regulating the rate at which they disclose to Rose her future husband and marriage instead of presenting a single or rapid shift from ignorance to enlightenment; Douw and Vanderhausen are shown as only hinting at Rose's future through veiled comments, such as Douw's assertion that Rose's beautiful face "will make [her] fortune," and when he echoes Bluebeard's wife's thoughts by claiming that wealth and liberality, "if not of power sufficient actually to alter the shape of the features, at least of efficacy enough to prevent one thinking them so much amiss" (2:219 and 2:227-28, *Classic* 144). Like Rose, Lucy is supposed to adhere to gradual knowledge disclosure to check the possible mental and physical shock of an immediate and complete revelation.

But unlike Rose, who acquiesces to Douw's marriage decision and to Vanderhausen's power over her as husband, Lucy combats Paul's reactions to her academic learning: "when M. Paul sneered at me, I wanted to possess [knowledge] more fully; his injustice stirred in me ambitious wishes—it imparted a strong stimulus—it gave wings to aspiration" (3:508-09). Lucy justifies overstepping proper female knowledge acquisition boundaries because Paul attempts to force those boundaries on her; it is not limiting what women should learn that bothers her, but instead it is how Paul attempts to force those limitations onto *her* that incites retaliation. Just as she contests Paul's control over her vision and knowledge in the art gallery, Lucy refuses to decelerate her learning despite her possible agreement that such rapid comprehension displays a "godlike thirst" for "unfeminine knowledge" (3:508).

Even though Lucy defies Paul's desire to decelerate her knowledge acquisition until Paul feels guilty for emotionally hurting her, she still reveals remnants of socially embedded concepts of women's knowledge restraints, as she (subconsciously or not) alleges forgetfulness regarding what Paul taught her, describing it as "some branch of education (I think it was arithmetic)" (3:507). How does she forget the subject in which Paul tutored her in such a psychologically and emotionally stressful manner? Her claim of forgetting even the general topic of the lessons hints at a possible agreement that there either are or should be limits to women's learning; the mere fact that Lucy recognizes the existence of such a thing as "unfeminine knowledge" and that she "had no such appetite" for that "contraband" points to an (at least subconscious) acknowledgement of such limits. Just as Lucy's negative commentary regarding the untidy, lazy Cleopatra reflects patriarchal ideals of the Victorian woman, Lucy's reticence regarding Paul's lessons suggests some passive complicity with Victorian-era patriarchal claims that women's intellects need monitoring. Lucy's drive to conflate socially construed gender divisions can consequently be interpreted as coming not necessarily from a desire for society to view women and men as equal but instead from personal anxieties regarding Paul's attempts to place *her* within such patriarchal constrictions.

Furthermore, despite Paul's resemblance to Bluebeard and men in "Schalken" regarding knowledge, similarities become convoluted when revelation in *Villette* deals not with academics, but with Paul's past. Paul at first resembles Bluebeard in this matter because Lucy's narrative never explicitly presents him as telling Lucy of his past engagement to the deceased Justine Marie and his ongoing bonds to her family; Lucy only learns of Paul's past love once his story is gradually revealed by other means and characters (3:587-91). Lucy's sole visual knowledge of the dead love is through a portrait that doubles as secret door to a chamber occupied by Justine Marie's grandmother, Madame Walravens. While Lucy waits for a storm to pass, Paul's former tutor Père Silus explains that Paul's fidelity to the woman in the painting lingers: Paul financially supports her grandmother (3:566-72). Though Madame Walravens inhabits the

chamber, Justine Marie is the one confined like a wife of Bluebeard, residing in a convent until her death because her grandmother opposed a marriage to Paul. Madame Walravens continues to assert control even over the confined, frozen image of Justine Marie that is in a way comparable to Schalken's painting of Rose, utilizing it to conceal her room's entrance. But this power is solely due to Paul's financial aid and his "[bringing her] to this house" (3:568). Additionally, Paul does not control what Père Silus tells Lucy, but he maintains silence regarding his past and his current financial bonds, only obliquely discussing his situation once Lucy already knows it and has seen the moveable portrait of his lost love. Paul thus, in a contorted and complex manner, maintains some resemblance to Bluebeard and Schalken through indirect power over a past love's image. However, this image is of the dead Justine Marie, not the defiant Lucy who demands personal freedom and visual control.

Though Paul at times challenges and confuses Lucy by policing her sight and mental enlightenment, he eventually appears to accept Lucy's refusal of containment within patriarchal restrictions on women. Paul comes to treat Lucy as not only a respected colleague he wishes to aid and please but also an entrepreneur, for he does not own the school/house he sets up for Lucy and does not pay her rent (3:706-07). Though he gifts Lucy the initial payment for her future home and business, Paul leaves Lucy's success and livelihood to Lucy. In the ultimate verbal demonstration of his recognition that Lucy will not stand for being fully contained or controlled, Paul expresses his love for her in three telling sentences: one in which Lucy possesses decisive, active control ("take my love"), one in which they share ("One day share my life"—here Paul does not attempt to take part of her life but instead invites Lucy to share his), and one in which she is in a sense in his possession but still maintains the ultimate decision to accept that position ("Be my dearest, first on earth") (3:709). Paul acknowledges Lucy's need for personal control, and so it momentarily seems as if Lucy and Paul can build a future that will not mentally, physically, and visually constrain her like the marriages of Bluebeard's wives and Rose do to these women; Lucy is to be no stereotypical "angel of the hearth" who simply complies with patriarchy's tenets while serving and caring for others with benevolent silence and alacrity.

In return, Lucy's language and reactions to Paul implicitly admit increased acquiescence to his authority. Once Paul reveals his understanding of (though not necessarily agreement with) Lucy's control anxieties, Lucy willingly exhibits actions and language hinting at submission. After Paul reveals his gift of the school, Lucy relates, "M. Paul claimed my hospitality; occupied and afoot since morning, he needed refreshment; he said I should offer him chocolate….With what shy joy I accepted my part as hostess, arranged the salver, served the benefactor-guest" (3:704-05). She further muses, "Once—unknown, and unloved, I held him harsh and strange; the low stature, the wiry make, the angles, the darkness, the manner, displeased me. Now, penetrated

with his influence, and living by his affection, having his worth by intellect, and his goodness by heart—I preferred him before all humanity" (3:710). Instead of just conflating boundaries herself, Lucy allows Paul to infiltrate and influence her in a manner her control and containment anxieties previously did not allow. However, Lucy never fully relinquishes her Bluebeard-like mixture of possessiveness, constriction, and control even by her narrative's conclusion; while describing her happiness awaiting Paul's return, she states: "I thought I loved him when he went away; I love him now in another degree; he is more my own" (3:714). Here, Lucy revels in possessing Paul. Through "my own," Lucy asserts control over a man instead of reacting to men observing and attempting to control her. Though she does not control Paul's body, she asserts ownership over his heart and the version of Paul residing in her mind that sustains her hopes for a happy future.

Lucy's hybrid states and boundary conflations are symptomatic of her ultimate subconscious desire to suspend herself in an eternal limbo—she longs to preserve herself like Bluebeard's never-changing wives and Rose in order to elude the loneliness and despair she knows lies ahead in her narrative's future. This desire for eternal living death is especially evident through the word choices and manner by which Lucy describes her grief over her love for Graham and then for Paul after the two exchange their pledges of love. In desiring to suspend herself, Lucy consequently suspends symbolic and mental versions of Graham and Paul. Her reflections regarding Graham reveal this subconscious desire through eulogy-like descriptions and allusions to confined spaces. For instance, when Lucy appears to recognize the imminent romance between Graham and Paulina through how Graham watches Paulina, she notices that "[not] one of those pretty impulses and natural breaks [in Paulina's speech] escaped [Graham]. He did not miss one characteristic movement, one hesitation in language, or one lisp in utterance" (2:412). By observing Graham observing Paulina, Lucy perceives the dying possibility that Graham reciprocates her romantic love:

> Ten years ago, this pair had always found abundance to say to each other; the intervening decade had not narrowed the experience or impoverished the intelligence of either: besides, there are certain natures of which the mutual influence is such, that the more they say, the more they have to say. For these, out of association grows adhesion, and out of adhesion, amalgamation. (2:413)

In recognizing Graham and Paulina's developing love, Lucy is forced to examine her own stunted relationship with Graham in which she denies him any view of her love for him. Additionally, she soon after suspects that Madame Beck reads and shares her treasured letters from Graham with Paul, thus compelling Lucy to contemplate the letters that symbolize her unrequited

romantic love. Lucy's protection of the precious "contents of [her] casket" acts as a rebellion against deep infiltration by Beck and, more importantly, the "lurid flash out of [Paul's] angry eye" (2:422). Even beyond wrapping the letters in silk and enclosing them in a hermetically sealed jar, Lucy further repels forbidden viewing of her letter hoard: "I fetched…a slate and some mortar, put the slate on the hollow, secured it with cement, covered the whole with black mould, and, finally, replaced the ivy. This done, I rested, leaning against the tree; lingering, like any other mourner, beside a newly-sodded grave" (2:424-25). Here, Lucy reveals her obsessive anxieties regarding her control over the display and observation of her internal self. Through her obsessive triple-encasement of the letters, Lucy symbolically confines and suspends her love for Graham away from prying eyes and the destructive effects of time (deterioration, damage by vermin, etc.). Consequently, she becomes like Bluebeard to the Graham of her romantic desires. Her reactions against infiltration spur her into literally preserving Graham's words from the ravages of time while she consciously attempts "to bury a grief. That grief over which I had lately been weeping…must be interred" (2:424). Lucy's grief and love are sealed off from the rest of the world and suspended with Graham's words at the base of the tree supposedly marking another live burial—that of the Nun punished by the patriarchal Catholic Church and allegedly haunting the pensionnat.[9] By utilizing this spot, Lucy mimics the Nun's fate, creating a live burial of Graham as symbolized by his letters. She thus encases and inters the physical while creating an immortal ghostly memory of the treasure that lives on in her mind. Having such "corpses" *not* visible and on display reveals the Nun and Lucy's buried version of Graham as symbolic memories used by the living; instead of the body being displayed and used for horror as in "Bluebeard," the interred versions of the Nun and Lucy's Graham resemble the age-defying vision of Rose in Rotterdam Church in that all three apparitions continue to exist by haunting memory and mind.

Lucy also implies a desire to be both Bluebeard *and* Bluebeard's wives—controller of the display, controlled, observer, and observed all in one—through one of her final reflections on Graham; she writes, "Graham's thoughts of me were not entirely those of a frozen indifference, after all. I believe in that goodly mansion, his heart, he kept one little place under the skylights where Lucy might have entertainment, if she chose to call….[Gradually], by long and equal kindness, he proved to me that he kept one little closet, over the door of which was written 'Lucy's Room' (3:661-62). Though Lucy longs for enclosure within Graham's heart, she cannot resign herself to complete containment even within this desired space. Thus, not only does Lucy *not* picture herself within "Lucy's Room," but she also imagines skylights through which that room can be illuminated, unlike the darkness-engulfed rooms of Bluebeard's wives and Rose. In contrast, Lucy compares an imaginary enclosure for Graham to the magical tent of Peri-Banou in the *Arabian Nights*:

"All my life long I carried [the tent] folded in the hollow of my hand - yet, released from that hold and constriction, I know not but its innate capacity for expanse might have magnified it into a tabernacle for a host" (3:662). Although this tent has the ability for extreme expansion, Lucy restricts it to within the palm of her hand. She yet again creates an enclosure for Graham over which she asserts authority, this time one that is disturbingly poised for a potential future reception.

The open, lighted enclosure for herself along with the tent for Graham she regulates and her obsessively encased and interred casket for the Graham of her romantic desires augment a depiction of Lucy even further resembling Bluebeard when coupled with her account of Paul's possible death while returning from the West Indies (3:714-15). By never fully acknowledging Paul's death at sea and instead stating that readers may "picture union and a happy succeeding life," Lucy places Paul in uncertainty between life and death (3:715). Her language implying Paul's death while never definitively stating it illustrates Lucy's ultimate desire for eternal suspension within past memories (before Paul's death) to escape her emotionally painful present void of Paul's love and acceptance of her need to avoid customary patriarchal regulations of women. Through her cryptic descriptions of the deadly storm that concludes Paul's return journey, Lucy depicts two aspects of Paul that emulate depictions of Rose in "Schalken." First, Paul's body (if his death is taken as fact) travels downward like those of Bluebeard's wives and Rose previously discussed, especially Rose's implied plunge into water: Schalken looks out the open bedroom window and "beheld, or thought he beheld, the waters of the broad canal beneath settling ring after ring in heavily circular ripples, as if a moment before disturbed by the immersion of some large and heavy mass" (2:246). Similar to Rose's body, Paul's body is implied as interred within water (715; v. 3, ch. 38). Second, and also like Rose, Paul is symbolically kept alive by a lover. Instead of painting a portrait of Paul as Schalken does for Rose, Lucy both pens an immortalized version of Paul confined within the pages of her narrative and creates a Paul kept alive within her mind evinced by her refusal to verbally admit his death. Consequently, the suspended memories of Paul and Graham in Lucy's mental chamber of the past sustain her, but also hold her partially in a timeless fantasy, thus denying her a truly complete psychological healing from and acceptance of lost love.

It is fitting that the name "Lucy" derives from a Latin term for "light." While Bluebeard's wife can barely see into the forbidden chamber and views her predecessors through the medium of a mirroring pool of blood, Rose Velderkaust dreads the isolating, frightening darkness that conceals the Bluebeard-like Vanderhausen (2:239-44). "Schalken" moves a step beyond "Bluebeard" in that Schalken depicts Rose in his portrait as coquettishly controlling most of the painting's scene through her lantern light; she seems

to know what is hidden in the darkness surrounding her but refuses to reveal exactly what makes her smile so archly. Examining *Villette* as reflecting influence from both of these tales provides an insightful interpretation of Lucy as bending or flouting patriarchal perspectives on women not because she is a radical feminist but because of her anxieties regarding personal control and confinement. Like Rose in Schalken's painting, Lucy illuminates her audience's view of herself and her life. But unlike in "Schalken," where control and knowledge appear to be in a woman's hands but are actually regulated by men, in *Villette* Lucy combats efforts to control what she observes and how others observe her, muddying Victorian patriarchy notions regarding the female body through conflating boundaries that separate observer and observed, male and female. Lucy at times even reverses the concept of the patriarchal male gaze onto itself, using man's viewing woman as a moment when she studies the man along with his gaze on the female body.

Furthermore, Lucy can be interpreted as defying reader desire for a voyeuristic-like view of her narrative. As Laura Mulvey states in her influential "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed" (33). Within Lucy's narrative, scopophilia presented by the male gaze and male-regulated gaze as it exists in both "Bluebeard" and "Schalken" is complicated and challenged by Lucy when she senses active constriction and scrutiny of her freedom by Paul. Lucy also manipulates our perceptions of her life by asserting her narrative authority; she puts herself on display by writing about herself but then presents only a selected, controlled view that implies, without ever explicitly stating, a conclusion of her love with Paul through his deathly encasement within the ocean's depths. Indeed, the mere fact that Lucy creates an autobiographical narrative but is reticent on many key details, such as how she becomes an orphan and if Paul truly dies at sea when returning home, illustrates Lucy's attempt to control self-disclosure. Perhaps, then, Lucy attempts to keep not only herself in a condition of mental suspension in the past where she hoards her loves but also her audience. Consequently, the reader becomes like Graham, Paul, Rose, and Bluebeard's dead wives, suspended within Lucy's narrative control.

BOSTON COLLEGE

NOTES

I wish to thank Judith Wilt for her insightful suggestions and readings of this essay throughout its development. I also wish to thank the editors of *Studies in the Novel* and two reviewers for helpful comments on an earlier version of this work.

[1] 1:190. All subsequent references to *Villette* derive from Rosengarten and Smith's edition of the text.

[2] All subsequent references to "Bluebeard" come from Tatar's *The Classic Fairy Tales* edition of the text. Though Perrault's "Le Barbe bleue" is the earliest known literary tale to use the name "Bluebeard," similar stories from a variety of cultures precede Perrault's tale. See also Casie E. Hermansson's *Bluebeard: A Reader's Guide to the English Tradition* and Jack Zipes's *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

[3] Cheng draws attention to the issue of suspension in *Villette* as well, using Freud's concepts of mourning and melancholia to examine Lucy's grief and narrative rather than the folkloric, feminist, and somewhat gothic combinatory close reading explored in the present essay.

[4] Such works include *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837), *Vanity Fair* (1848), *Hard Times* (1854), and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896). Thackeray, who returned to the "Bluebeard" fairy tale in a number of his works, even wrote a comic short story continuation entitled "Bluebeard's Ghost" (1843) and the unpublished "Bluebeard at Breakfast" (see Pyrhönen 9).

[5] Bluebeard leaves his wife "[after] a month had passed" (*Classic* 144). In "A Chapter," "[more] than a month" passes from when Fanny arrives at her new home to her discovery of Lord Glenfallen's previous wife (3:77 and 62).

[6] All subsequent uses of "Schalken" come from the the 1880 edition of *The Purcell Papers*.

[7] The wives' corpses are described as decomposing only in later variations of "Bluebeard," such as Joseph Jacobs's 1890 "Mr. Fox," in which Lady Mary finds "bodies and skeletons of beautiful young ladies all stained with blood" in her fiancé's home (*Classic* 154).

[8] 2:238. Bronfen 42, and see chapter 1 of Sedgwick's text. Here, I extend Sedgwick's interpretation of women as symbolic property linking men to include the twist of Rose as a property exchange between a living man and a dead man.

[9] 1:148. Though Lucy later learns the legend is untrue, the Nun was supposedly buried at the tree's base by a monk because she broke a religious vow.

WORKS CITED

Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Villette*. 1853. Ed. Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.

Byrne, Patrick F. "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu: A Centenary Memoir." *Dublin Historical Record*. 26.3 (1973): 80-92.

Cheng, Anne A. "Reading Lucy Snowe's Cryptology: Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* and Suspended Mourning." *Qui Parle*. 4.2 (1991): 75-90.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.

Grimm, Jakob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *Grimms' Tales for Young and Old: The Complete Stories*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New York: Doubleday, 1977.

Hermansson, Casie E. *Bluebeard: A Reader's Guide to the English Tradition*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2009.

Kromm, Jane. "Visual Culture and Scopic Custom in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*." *Victorian Literature and Culture*. 26.2 (1998): 369-94.

Lamonica, Drew. *"We Are Three Sisters:" Self and Family in the Writings of the Brontës*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2003.

Langland, Elizabeth. "Nobody's Angel: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel." *PMLA*. 107.2 (1992): 290-304.

Lee, Hsiao-Hung. *"Possibilities of Hidden Things:" Narrative Transgression in Victorian Fictional Autobiographies*. New York: Peter Lang, 1996.
LeFanu, Joseph Sheridan. *The Purcell Papers*. 3 vols. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1880.
McCormack, W. J. *Dissolute Characters: Irish Literary History through Balzac, Sheridan Le Fanu, Yeats and Bowen*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993.
Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." 1975. *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Erens. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. 28-40.
Pyrhönen, Heta. *Bluebeard Gothic: Jane Eyre and Its Progeny*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2010.
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia UP, 1985.
Tatar, Maria, ed. *The Classic Fairy Tales*. New York: Norton, 1999.
—. *Secrets Beyond the Door: The Story of Bluebeard and His Wives*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.
Trecker, Janice Law. "Sex, Science and Education." *American Quarterly*. 26.4 (1974): 352-66.
Voskuil, Lynn M. "Acting Naturally: Brontë, Lewes, and the Problem of Gender Performance." *ELH*. 62.2 (1995): 409-42.
Zipes, Jack, ed. *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. New York: Norton, 2001.